

VZCZCXRO8357
PP RUEHBI
DE RUEHLM #1758/01 2971256
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 241256Z OCT 06
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4546
INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6427
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 4479
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3259
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0093
RUEHN/AMEMBASSY OSLO 3350
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0934
RUEHRK/AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK 0008
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0270
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2431
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 6980
RUEHB/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 4813
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO 0065
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHG/USMISSION GENEVA 1438
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0462
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001758

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/INS, USPACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/09/2016

TAGS: PREL PGOV CE

SUBJECT: CO-CHAIR AMBASSADORS (MINUS US) URGE LTTE
DELEGATION TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITY AFFORDED BY GENEVA TALKS

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake, Jr. for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Co-Chair Ambassadors (minus Ambassador Blake) met on October 24 the LTTE delegation traveling to talks with the Government of Sri Lanka that are expected to begin in Geneva on October 28. The Co-Chairs urged the LTTE to seize the opportunity afforded by Geneva and exercise maximum military restraint. The LTTE delegation complained about the EU listing of the LTTE as a terrorist organization, GSL aerial bombardments, and the demerger decision. They acknowledged the SLFP-UNP agreement had diminished the influence of hard-line parties. Comment: The Government's decision to abide by its agreement to facilitate the travel by helicopter of the LTTE delegation to the airport from Killinochchi is a small but important beginning. Most knowledgeable observers do not expect any breakthroughs in Geneva. Rather they see Geneva as the first step in what everyone hopes will be a series of meetings. A good outcome in Geneva therefore will be a detailed discussion of the issues to be discussed in future meetings and an agreement on when and where subsequent talks should take place. The Norwegians will be pushing for this outcome. End Summary.

¶2. (c) Co-Chair Ambassadors met on October 24 the LTTE delegation traveling to talks with the Government of Sri Lanka that are expected to begin in Geneva on October 28. Per long-standing US policy, Ambassador Blake did not attend the meeting but obtained a readout from German Ambassador Werth. The LTTE delegation arrived from Killinochchi earlier in the day on helicopters provided by the Government as agreed with the Norwegian facilitators. Norwegian Ambassador Brattskar traveled with the LTTE delegation on the helicopters to ensure the trip went smoothly, which it did.

LTTE Should Seize Opportunity for Peace

¶3. (C) As agreed in a meeting earlier in the day with

Co-Chair Ambassadors including Ambassador Blake, Ambassador Werth gave the LTTE the following message from the Co-Chairs:

-- The Co-Chairs regard Geneva as an important opportunity to resume the peace process. The LTTE must use the opportunity to engage seriously and not grandstand as they did in the previous round earlier this year in Oslo.

-- The LTTE should think of Geneva as the first in a series of talks and not seek immediate breakthroughs.

-- Both sides must show maximum restraint and avoid military actions that could diminish prospects for successful talks.

-- The Co-Chairs consider that the SLFP-UNP rapprochement opens a great opportunity for peace and for resolving the demerger of the NorthEast that both sides should seize.

-- Both sides should allow NGOs access to perform humanitarian work.

-- The LTTE should guarantee the safety of ships flying UN or ICRC flags carrying humanitarian supplies to Jaffna.

LTTE Expectations Low

¶4. (C) According to Werth, Tamilselvan provided the following response on behalf of the LTTE:

-- The LTTE appreciates the opportunity to meet the Co-Chair Ambassadors.

COLOMBO 00001758 002 OF 002

-- The LTTE sees the Geneva meeting as a tiny light at the end of dark tunnel (e.g. they have low expectations).

-- The LTTE considers the EU listing of the LTTE as a terrorist organization as a setback to the peace process and hopes this decision might be reviewed.

-- Tamilselvan described in some detail and in familiar terms the suffering of the Tamil people, noting that only the Cease-fire Agreement had brought any relief. He said the LTTE was going to Geneva with a "heavy heart" due to the hardship the civilian population had suffered from Government aerial bombings.

-- He acknowledged that the SLFP-UNP agreement could create something that would diminish the influence of hard-line parties such as the JVP and JHU.

-- He said the demerger decision had cut the Tamil homeland in two thereby neglecting the roots of the Tamil population. He also complained the decision had come at a totally inappropriate time as peace talks were resuming in Geneva.

-- With respect to the request to allow ICRC- and UN-flagged vessels to carry humanitarian supplies to Jaffna, the LTTE said they could not do so since they do not control the sea lanes and cannot be held responsible if something happens to such ships. Instead, the LTTE insisted, the A-9 road to Jaffna must be reopened.

¶5. (C) The German Ambassador commented that the meeting had resulted in a good frank exchange. The meeting lasted 50 minutes, much of which was consumed with translating all statements back and forth into Tamil. He said the LTTE agreed to the Co-Chair demand that the LTTE not publicize the details of the meeting.

Next Steps

¶6. (C) The LTTE delegation will spend tonight at the airport

hotel and expects to depart Colombo on a commercial flight at 0910 on October 25. Following the talks in Geneva, the Government of Norway expects the LTTE to travel to Oslo on November 1 for two days. The delegation may also go to Iceland to make a point they are not diplomatically isolated, but the Norwegians tell us that leg is not yet settled.

Comment - So Far So Good

¶7. (C) The Government's decision to abide by its agreement to facilitate the travel by helicopter of the LTTE delegation to the airport from Killinochi marks a small but important beginning. Most knowledgeable observers do not expect any breakthroughs in Geneva. Rather they see Geneva as the first step in a series of meetings. A good outcome in Geneva therefore will be a detailed discussion of the issues to be discussed in future meetings and an agreement on when and where those talks should take place. The Norwegians will be pushing for this outcome.

BLAKE